

## Message Text

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ACTION AF-10

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AMEMBASSY OTTAWA  
AMEMBASSY PARIS  
AMEMBASSY PRETORIA  
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L LUSAKA 1953

CAPE TOWN FOR EMBASSY

E.O. 11652: GDS  
TAGS: PDEV PORG WA SF RH UR  
SUBJ: NAMIBIA: DISCUSSION WITH SOVIET AMBASSADOR

1. SUMMARY: IN A MEETING WITH AMBASSADORS MCHENRY AND LOW,  
SOVIET AMBASSADOR SOLODOVNIKOV EMPHASIZED HIS BELIEF THAT THE  
WESTERN FIVE PROPOSAL FOR NAMIBIA DID NOT PROVIDE SUFFICIENT  
GUARANTEES FOR SWAPO. HE SAID THE SOVIETS PREFER A POLITICAL  
SOLUTION OVER A MILITARY ONE, BUT WILL SUPPORT WHICHEVER  
COURSE SWAPO CHOOSES. SOLODOVNIKOV EXPRESSED GREATER CONFIDENCE  
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IN THE ANGLO-AMERICAN PLAN FOR ZIMBABWE THAN IN THE FIVE'S  
PLAN FOR NAMIBIA AND TRIED TO DRAW A COMPARISON BETWEEN THE TWO  
SITUATIONS. MCHENRY AND LOW DETAILED THE REASONABLE SAFEGUARDS  
FOR SWAPO AND POINTED OUT THAT THE NAMIBIAN AND RHODESIAN  
SITUATIONS WERE QUITE DIFFERENT. THE SOUTH AFRICANS COULD  
PROBABLY HOLD ELECTIONS WHILE SMITH WOULD HAVE GREAT DIFFICULTY.  
THE MEETING PROVIDED AN OCCASION FOR A USEFUL EXCHANGE. END

SUMMARY.

2. AMBASSADORS MCHENRY AND LOW CALLED ON SOVIET AMBASSADOR SOLODOVNIKOV AFTERNOON OF MAY 30 FOR AN INFORMAL DISCUSSION OF THE WESTERN FIVE PROPOSALS FOR NAMIBIA. AFTER AMBASSADOR MCHENRY GAVE A BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF HIS CURRENT TRIP, SOLODOVNIKOV SAID THAT HE WAS WELL AWARE OF SWAPO'S VIEWS BUT KNEW LITTLE OF WHAT THE SOUTH AFRICANS WERE THINKING. MCHENRY DESCRIBED SOME OF SOUTH AFRICA'S FEARS AND CONCERNS. HE NOTED THE MUTUAL DISTRUST AND DEEP SUSPICION WHICH EACH SIDE HOLDS REGARDING THE MOTIVES OF THE OTHER AND WHICH WAS SERVING AS THE BASIC STUMBLING BLOCK TO GREATER PROGRESS.

3. THE SOVIET AMBASSADOR SAID THE SOUTH AFRICANS SHOULD HAVE NOTHING TO FEAR FROM A SWAPO GOVERNMENT BECAUSE OF NAMIBIA'S DEPENDENCE ON ITS LINKS WITH SOUTH AFRICA AND THE WEST--LINKS WHICH COULD NOT BE BROKEN QUICKLY. AT THE SAME TIME, HOWEVER, SWAPO HAD REASON FOR SUSPICION BECAUSE THERE ARE INSUFFICIENT GUARANTEES IN THE PROPOSALS TO PREVENT SOUTH AFRICA FROM REVERSING THE PROCESS AT SOME POINT. MCHENRY ENUMERATED THE SAFEGUARDS CONTAINED IN THE PLAN WHICH PROVIDED SWAPO WITH REASONABLE GUARANTEES FOR THE PROCESS, AND NOTED THAT THE ISSUE COULD NOT BE RESOLVED IF SWAPO SIMPLY WANTED TO BE GUARANTEED A SURE THING. LOW POINTED OUT THAT SWAPO'S ASSURANCES WOULD BE MUCH LESS IF SWAPO REFUSED TO ACCEPT THE PROPOSALS AND SOUTH AFRICA RESORTED TO AN INTERNAL SETTLEMENT.

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4. SOLODOVNIKOV AGREED THAT THIS CREATED A DIFFICULT DECISION FOR SWAPO AND ADDED THAT IT WAS ONE WHICH THEY WERE AFRAID TO TAKE. LOW ARGUED THAT THE PROPOSAL PROVIDED SWAPO THE SUREST WAY TO POWER IF IT HAD POLITICAL SUPPORT. SOLODOVNIKOV SAID THE SOVIET UNION PREFERRED A POLITICAL OVER A MILITARY SOLUTION TO THE PROBLEM BUT WOULD SUPPORT WHATEVER COURSE SWAPO CHOOSES. HE REITERATED HIS VIEW THAT MORE GUARANTEES WERE NEEDED AND TRIED TO DRAW A COMPARISON WITH THE ANGLO-AMERICAN PLAN FOR ZIMBABWE, WHICH HE SAID THE SOVIETS PREFERRED BECAUSE IT PROVIDED GREATER SAFEGUARDS FOR THE NATIONALISTS. THE SOVIET SAID THAT WE OUT TO LET THE SOUTH AFRICANS GO AHEAD AND TRY AN INTERNAL SETTLEMENT IN NAMIBIA. THEY WOULD SOON FIND OUT, LIKE SMITH HAD, THAT IT WAS NOT POSSIBLE. LOW RESPONDED THAT THE SITUATION IN NAMIBIA WAS VERY DIFFERENT FROM THAT IN RHODESIA. WHILE SMITH MIGHT HAVE DIFFICULTY RUNNING AN ELECTION IN RHODESIA, IT WAS QUITE PROBABLE THAT THE SOUTH AFRICANS COULD SUCCEED IN DOING SO IN NAMIBIA. ONCE THE NEW GOVERNMENT WAS INSTALLED, THEY WOULD FEEL AN OBLIGATION TO DEFEND IT, AND THE SITUATION WOULD BE FORCED INTO THE MILITARY SOLUTION WHICH THE SOVIETS SAY THEY WISH TO AVOID.

5. MCHENRY AND LOW POINTED OUT THAT ACCEPTANCE OF THE FIVE'S PROPOSAL WOULD COMPLETELY CHANGE THE SITUATION ON THE GROUND IN NAMIBIA, AND THE REMOVAL OF THE VAST MAJORITY OF THE SOUTH AFRICAN SOLDIERS AND THE INSTALLATION OF A SIZEABLE UN FORCE WOULD PROVIDE REASONABLE SAFEGUARDS FOR A TRANSITION TO INDEPENDENCE. SOLODOVNIKOV ASKED WHAT WOULD BE THE DISPOSITION OF SWAPO TROOPS IN ANGOLA. HE APPEARED TO REGISTER WITH APPROVAL MCHENRY'S RESPONSE THAT THOSE WHO RETURNED TO NAMIBIA WOULD TURN IN THEIR ARMS, BUT THERE WOULD BE NO RESTRICTIONS ON THOSE WHO REMAINED IN ANGOLA. AFTER CERTIFICATION OF THE ELECTION HOWEVER THEY WOULD BE EXPECTED TO RETURN TO THE INDEPENDENT NAMIBIA.

6. COMMENT: WE BELIEVE IT WAS USEFUL TO MEET WITH SOLODOVNIKOV AND COVER SOME OF THE DETAILS OF THE WESTERN FIVE PROPOSAL.  
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WHILE HE DID NOT APPEAR TO BE MOVED FROM HIS VIEW THAT GREATER GUARANTEES ARE NEEDED, THE POINT THAT SOUTH AFRICA WAS CAPABLE OF MOVING ON AN INTERNAL SETTLEMENT WAS NOT LOST ON HIM. IT IS NOT ENTIRELY CLEAR WHY THE SOVIETS TAKE A MORE POSITIVE VIEW OF THE ANGLO-AMERICAN INITIATIVES FOR RHODESIA THAN THE FIVE-POWER PROPOSALS ON NAMIBIA. ONE INTERPRETATION IS THAT THERE IS AN ASSURANCE IN THE ANGLO-AMERICAN PROPOSALS THAT THE MILITARY FORCES OF ZAPU WHICH WERE TRAINED AND EQUIPPED BY THE SOVIETS ARE GUARANTEED A PLACE IN AN INDEPENDENT ZIMBABWE WHILE THERE IS NO SUCH ASSURANCE IN THE NAMIBIA PROPOSALS.  
LOW

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